

---Minutes: Leesburg Planning Commission March 29, 2001

The Leesburg Planning Commission met on Thursday, March 29, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers at 25 West Market Street, Leesburg, VA. Members present for this meeting were: Chairman C. Vaughan, Commissioners: C. Cable, D. Kennedy, L. Schonberger, L. Werner, and W. Zawacki. Absent was Councilmember Umstattd. Staff members present for the meeting were Lee Phillips, Nick Colonna, Paul Gauthier and Jennifer Moore.

MINUTES:

None

SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT

HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL – Mr. Colonna thanked the Commission for hearing this item tonight, outside of the regularly scheduled meeting.

Mr. Colonna gave a summary of the issues that were of concern at the last meeting regarding this application. The Planning Commission has a copy of the staff report in their packets. Mr. Colonna stated that all issues have been resolved between staff and the applicant.

Commissioner Schonberger asked about the issue of right-of-way improvements and whether or not the road improvements would fit within the right-of-way. Mr. Gauthier stated that the Town has received a letter from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) with comments so the Town is now waiting for an approval from VDOT. The Town would not approve the plan until the applicant has an entrance permit and approval from VDOT.

Commissioner Schonberger stated that the comments read that there is a transition of the northbound lane within the right-of-way and he would like to know what would happen if the right-of-way would not fit within the permissible area. Mr. Gauthier stated that all of the improvements are shown within the right-of-way. He stated that the question was could the improvements be built without a temporary construction easement on the neighbor's property. Mr. Gauthier stated that the engineer and the owner of the property had a discussion where the neighbor stated that they did not want the school board on the property and the engineer has assured the school board that the improvements can be done without encroaching on the neighbor's property.

Minutes: Leesburg Planning Commission March 29, 2001

Commissioner Schonberger stated that Mr. Gauthier had made a comment that if the adjacent property owner's property were within the Town boundary, the bus lane entrance would not be approved by the Town and would like Mr. Gauthier to elaborate on that. Mr. Gauthier stated that the Town would make the school provide a right turn lane into the school. If a right turn lane is provided the Town would go back 200 feet from the entrance and put a 150-foot taper. He stated that the Town Ordinance stated that you cannot have an entrance within a turn lane or tape and since the private driveway was there first then the entrance into the school would need to be moved. Mr. Gauthier stated that he tried to do that in the beginning, however, the layout of the school was fixed and he has no jurisdiction over the road.

Commissioner Schonberger asked why the Town would require the taper. Mr. Gauthier stated that give the traffic on the road and the volume of turns expected he would require the turn lane.

Mr. Randy Vlad, representative for Loudoun County Public Schools, came forward to speak. Mr. Vlad stated that he has come to an agreement with Ms. Welsh that the applicant would put a note on the plan that says "note: Lot 1A (Ms. Welsh's property) driveway entrance shall be relocated if required by VDOT". Mr. Vlad stated that the developer has spent many hours with VDOT making sure that the design of the access point would work and could be built within the existing right-of-way. He stated that in speaking with Ms. Welsh he has agreed that at any time if the contractor feels he cannot make it work, they would come and request an easement prior to going onto her property.

Commissioner Cable asked Mr. Vlad to explain the bus drop off/pick up as well as the other parking area. Mr. Vlad gave the Commission some further information regarding access to the school for the busses as well as other vehicle traffic.

Commissioner Zawacki asked what was the capacity of the school. Mr. Vlad stated that it is 1,600 students.

Commissioner Zawacki asked how many parking spaces would be provided. Mr. Vlad stated that there would be 671 spaces including 11 handicap spaces. Commissioner Zawacki stated that he counted 611 plus 12 handicap plus 20 visitors. He stated that the 20 visitors are accounted for separately in the Town Zoning Ordinance.

Commissioner Zawacki stated that he would like to see the parking spaces expanded because he is aware that high schools are generally at or exceed capacity and the overflow traffic begins to park on the street and in this case that would prove to be very dangerous. Mr. Vlad stated that the parking problems at Loudoun County High School were addressed and that the proposed high school does have additional spaces reflected in the total amount. Mr. Vlad stated that he believes that there are also options available should there be an overflow.

Minutes: Leesburg Planning Commission March 29, 2001

Ms. Deborah Welsh, came forward to speak. Ms. Welsh stated that one of her concerns is that the children that live right next to the new school would not be attending the school, but would be bussed across town to Loudoun County High School.

Ms. Welsh stated that VDOT did return her call, however it did not take care of the problem.

Ms. Welsh stated that the issue regarding the taper and access to her property has been an issue for quite some time and is now in the hands of VDOT. She stated that the comment is on the plan and the property owners have agreed to that comment.

Commissioner Werner asked if all concerns in Ms. Welsh's letter had been addressed. Ms. Welsh stated that they have except for the VDOT issue and the Town has done all that it can on that issue and anything further would be up to VDOT.

Commissioner Schonberger made a motion to approve the application with the following changes;

1. That the date of February 13, 2001 be amended to March 27, 2001; and
2. At the end of the sentence "March 26, 2001" a "," be placed and then it should read, "revised March 29, 2001 as signed by Randolph J. Vlad, Civil Engineer, LCPS".

Motion: Schonberger

Second: Werner

Carried: 6-0

Commissioner Cable stated that initially she was very concerned about going forward with this application, however, knowing what the School Boards concerns are and the need to get the school moving forward and having the applicant have spent time with the neighbors to resolve the outstanding issues she is very comfortable with going forward with this application.

Commissioner Schonberger stated that he believes that these applications be moved through expeditiously because there is a shortage of schools and there is a necessity for them in the Town.

Commissioner Schonberger stated that his concern is safety and it troubles him that within the Town boundaries there would be a turn lane and because part of the project is just outside the Town boundaries no turn lane is provided. He hopes that the school would do the right thing to provide safety for the children.

Chairman Vaughan stated that he has the same concerns regarding the right turn lane and would like to see it addressed formerly by VDOT.

Minutes: Leesburg Planning Commission March 29, 2001

At this point the Commission took a five-minute break. Commissioner Schonberger had to leave at this point.

BAR APPOINTEE: Commissioner Zawacki stated that the Council received a letter in their packets from Kristie Lalire regarding the appointee, essentially stating that the BAR does not wish to have a Planning Commissioner representative appointed to the BAR.

Commissioner Werner stated that she believes that the Commission should move forward with appointing someone to the BAR until the Council makes its decision.

Chairman Vaughan stated that there are three people that are interested in the post, Commissioner Zawacki, Commissioner Werner and himself.

Chairman Vaughan stated that he has always heard that there should not be a lot of duplication of members on different committees. He stated that he and Commissioner Zawacki are not on another committee, however Commissioner Werner is on a Transportation Committee. Commissioner Werner stated that if she had known this was coming up she would not have agreed to be placed on the other Committee. She stated that that Committee has not yet started meeting at this time.

Chairman Vaughan stated that in keeping with not placing a Commissioner on more than one Committee that would only leave the nomination open to him and Commissioner Zawacki. Commissioner Werner stated that it is not a rule it has just been the custom.

Mr. Tompkins stated that it was his understanding that the Commission was going to wait to appoint someone until Council determined whether or not someone from the Commission would be serving on the BAR.

Commissioner Cable stated that she agrees, she believes that the Commission should wait because the issue is still up in the air with the Council. Commissioner Werner stated that in the mean time the BAR continues to meet with no representative from the Commission.

Chairman Vaughan stated that he believes that someone should be appointed until Council decides whether or not it wishes to change the process.

Commissioner Kennedy stated that he would have nominated Commissioner Werner to be on the BAR had she not been appointed to the other Committee and he would have appointed Commissioner Zawacki, however he believes that Commissioner Zawacki has his plate full with just learning the ins and outs of the Commission being the newest member. Therefore he would like to nominate Chairman Vaughan.

Minutes: Leesburg Planning Commission March 29, 2001

Motion: Kennedy

Second: Cable

Carried: 5-0

Commissioner Werner stated that she would be willing to support Chairman Vaughan, however she would like him to explain why he is interested in the BAR.

Chairman Vaughan stated that he does not live in the Historic District, however he is very interested in the Historic District and the direction of the BAR. He stated that he has always been curious as to how the BAR arrives at their decisions.

Commissioner Werner stated that she gets the impression that Chairman Vaughan believes that historical preservation and what the BAR does is a bunch of “falderal”. He stated that he does not think that, he believes that it is a very important process to have in the Town.

BY-LAWS – Chairman Vaughan thanked Commissioner Werner and Commissioner Cable for the large amount of time and effort that they have placed in revising the by-laws.

The Planning Commission went over additional comments by the Commission as well as the Town Attorney regarding the by-laws.

After the discussion the Planning Commission requested that Commissioner’s Werner and Cable fuse together everyone’s comments and prepare a document for the Commission to vote on at the next meeting.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.